

# Soccer Investor



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## Main News

### UK government report sees England as well-placed for FIFA 2018 bid

England would be well-placed to host the FIFA 2018 World Cup. This is the main conclusion of a feasibility report published today by the UK Treasury in co-operation with the Department of Media Culture and Sport (DMCS). An English bid to host the 2018 football World Cup would be backed by the government, ministers have pledged. Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister in waiting Gordon Brown and DMCS Secretary Tessa Jowell were joined this morning by the Minister for Sport, Richard Caborn, for a tour of the new Wembley National Stadium, which would host the final of the 2018 tournament if it was held in England. Gordon Brown said: "By 2018, it will be more than 50 years since England first hosted the World Cup, and I believe it is time the tournament returned to the nation which gave football to the world. With the Olympics in London in 2012, hosting the World Cup in 2018 would make the next decade the greatest in Britain's sporting history." Since England hosted the World Cup for the only time in 1966, every other major European football nation has hosted the tournament: Germany in 1974 and in 2006; Spain in 1982; Italy in 1990; and France in 1998. The Government launched the feasibility study in November 2005 as the first stage in a potential bid by the Football Association to host the tournament. At the time Brown said: "We are now starting work to understand what produces the best possible bid, how Government can support and assist the process, and how to ensure a bid will bring maximum benefits for every region...The young British children learning to play the game today can become the young stars of our national teams in 2018, and we must do everything we can to help them turn their talent and potential into World Cup success."

The study produced several key findings. First, that an English bid is well-placed in terms of stadium infrastructure, with eleven existing stadiums currently at least partly compliant with FIFA's requirements, and with the potential to host games. England is also well-placed in terms of its transport and tourism infrastructure, and its ability to manage the security and policing challenges of hosting the tournament. A bid would also gain much popular support. In a public opinion survey, 9 out of 10 people who expressed a preference said that they were in favour of England making a bid, with only small minorities in each region against the idea. The main reasons cited by supporters of the bid were that it would be good for the economy and good for national pride. The final decision on tabling a bid, however, lies with the Football Association (FA), which spent much time and money on an unsuccessful attempt to host the 2006 competition. Ms Jowell told BBC Radio Five Live: "The FA will, in due course, make their decision. What Gordon Brown and I are showing today is that a World Cup bid would have unqualified Government support. That was such an important part in winning an Olympic bid." BBC sports news correspondent Gordon Farquhar said that during its last bid the FA misjudged the internal politics of FIFA and that before it bid again, the association would want to ensure it had support at the highest level of the game. FA chief executive Brian Barwick said in a statement: "Government backing is a central part of any successful World Cup bid and this study underlines this government's commitment to bringing the world's biggest sports events to these shores."

The study also identified a number of specific issues which would need to be resolved by the FA as part of their deliberations on whether to launch a bid. These are first what the full costs of hosting a World Cup are, including any additional security and transport improvements, and how responsibility for those costs should be apportioned between The FA and other stakeholders. Secondly, what further work is required to ensure sufficient number of stadiums are fully compliant with FIFA regulations? Consideration is needed also of what steps could be taken to spread the benefits of hosting the tournament beyond those regions with existing stadiums (e.g. through imaginative location of training camps and team hotels)? Gordon Brown said: "I want every region of the country to share in the benefits of these sporting events, I want every young

person to be inspired by them to increase their own participation in sport, and – if The FA decide to launch a bid – I would make it my personal mission over the next few years to persuade countries around the world to support that bid." Ms Jowell insisted an English bid would be something people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would get behind too. "If any country in the UK were to host a global sporting event on this kind of scale, it becomes something that the whole of the UK becomes enthused by."

Before the feasibility study was published, the UK's main opposition party the Conservatives, said the World Cup bid should also include Scotland. Tory MPs say they want Glasgow and Edinburgh to be added to venues across England to create a "British bid" for the football tournament in 2018. The Conservatives said the Treasury study should have considered a joint bid, claiming that by including Scotland, the chances of winning the tournament would be enhanced. Treasury sources, however, originally poured scorn on the Tory proposal, describing it has a "piece of opportunism" which would fail to stand up to scrutiny. The plan was proposed by London Conservative MP Greg Hands, and has been backed by shadow Scottish Secretary David Mundell. Mundell said: "The government should consider the question of a joint England-Scotland bid. We could be looking at a stunning decade of sporting events from across the UK, from the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, the Olympics in London, hopefully, the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, and capped off by the World Cup in England and Scotland." Hands added: "You could see two of the groups being played in Scotland, with maybe the semi-final in Manchester and Glasgow before a final probably in London." He said: "One of the strengths of the German bid was that they had 12 different cities each with stadia which could hold more than 40,000 people. When you look at England, there are ten stadia of more than 40,000 but many of them are in the same city. The bid isn't as strong as when you have games in different cities. If you add in Glasgow and Edinburgh, then it all becomes much stronger. Having Scotland on board would actually make the bid much better. The other point is that the World Cup is now twice as big as it was when it was staged in England in 1966. We need to utilise the fabulous facilities in Scotland." A decision on whether to go for a joint bid would need to be made by the FA in London and the Scottish Football Association. A spokesman for the SFA said previously: "If the English FA were to contact us formally, we would consider the possibility but it is still a long way off." A spokesman for the Scottish Executive said: "It would be a matter for the SFA to decide whether to investigate the possibility of launching a joint-bid with the FA." Any bid whether joint or single would have to be submitted in 2010 before a decision late the following year.

## UEFA

### COMPETITION NEWS

#### UEFA plan for Italian Euro matches

UEFA has issued a statement with regard to European matches in Italy outlining the situation ahead of forthcoming matches. This follows the announcement last week by Italian Interior Minister, Giuliano Amato, in which he said that "only those stadia that meet the security norms will reopen to the fans - the others will be used to play in but without fans until they meet guidelines". Serie A resumed this weekend but various grounds were pronounced off-limits to spectators after failing to meet safety regulations. Of the four European club competition matches scheduled to take place in Italy, the situation is: For the two UEFA Champions League games that are to be staged at the Giuseppe Meazza stadium in Milan - Internazionale versus Valencia on 21 February, and the second-leg tie between AC Milan and Celtic on 7 March - there is a possibility that these could go ahead in Milan depending on work to be done at the stadium. More information on these two matches is expected early this week after further evaluation of the stadium. The UEFA Cup game between Livorno and Espanyol on 14 February is confirmed to be played in Livorno's Stadio Armando Picchi and as the stadium does not meet the current Italian security standards, this match will be behind closed doors. The UEFA Cup second leg between Parma and Braga on 22 February is currently scheduled at Parma's ground, the Ennio Tardini. At present this stadium is not on the approved list of Italian stadia to receive fans.

### ENGLAND

#### Arsenal agree Colorado Rapids partnership deal

Arsenal have signed an agreement which will see them exchange resources with Major League Soccer (MLS) team the Colorado Rapids. The partnership has been created between the Premier League side and Kroenke Sports Enterprises (KSE), an American-based sports and entertainment company. Arsenal will be

hoping that the deal will help increase American sports fans' awareness of their club and that KSE can help them successfully market themselves in the US. In a statement the club said: "Arsenal today enters into an exclusive agreement with KSE — the leading live sports and entertainment group based in Denver - with the primary aims of building the Arsenal brand in the US; helping to improve the quality of football at MLS team Colorado Rapids and supporting grassroots football in the US." The Gunners will also support the development of the Arsenal Cup which any side from across America will be free to enter. KSE executive vice-president Paul Andrews said: "We are thrilled to have established such a partnership with one of the leading clubs in the world that will help continue the expansion of our sport well into the future." The Rapids will also join Arsenal for training sessions at the beginning of March as part of their preparations for the new MLS season. The London team will undoubtedly hope to gain a new fan base in the US by agreeing to the partnership and will also hope to exchange players in a similar way to a deal they have with Belgian side Beveren. The announcement came three days after another Premiership side, Liverpool, announced a takeover by US entrepreneurs George Gillett Jr. and Tom Hicks. Rapids managing director Jeff Plush says that many similar situations exist with other franchises in the MLS, as the league continues to push its teams and brands on the global stage. "The LA Galaxy has a relationship with Chelsea. FC Dallas has a relationship with Tigres of Monterrey. I think everyone's looking to - it's a global game. How can we know people better? How can we learn from them? How can we make our club better in the process? Hopefully make their club better in the process as well. So I think it's certainly been done. It will continue to be done."

### **Liverpool to ape Real Madrid marketing model**

The new owners of Liverpool aim to follow the example of Real Madrid as regards marketing, according to Spanish sports daily AS. Liverpool coach Rafa Benitez has told George Gillett Jr. and Tom Hicks that they should study the Real marketing policy in order to improve income at the Premier League club. Benitez said: "Liverpool is a club that must grow using the ideas that have made us big and learning about new areas where we need to improve. For example, how many Liverpool shops do we have around the world? We have to do more things in areas like Asia and Spain where we are very popular. The Real Madrid name has served to make a lot of money in recent years." Gillett said: "Our intention is that the coach appears at more media events because of the knowledge he has of the game in Spain. This will allow Liverpool to become more popular in a larger part of the world, where the club is already well-known, but does not dominate."

### **Emirates stadium to host Servecast media summit**

Servecast, a provider of audio and video webcasting solutions for sports and media companies, is hosting a media conference at Arsenal's Emirates stadium on 7 March. conference will address the critical issues facing sports clubs, organisations and broadcasters with respect to their new media strategies. The conference is centred on the new media landscape for sport and TV, online video search engine strategies, the emerging role of mobile video and the opportunities of integrating online gambling.

Already the event has attracted seven clubs from the last 16 of the UEFA Champions League. All four of England's representatives – Chelsea, Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal – will be in attendance along with defending champions Barcelona, Internazionale and Scottish title-holders Glasgow Celtic. Also in attendance are Belgian club Anderlecht; FC St Pauli from Germany; Manchester City, Tottenham, Everton, Watford, Leicester City (England); and Glasgow Rangers and Hearts (Scotland). The FA Premier League and the Bundesliga are among the leading European football leagues being represented. Through its proprietary Media Studio platform, Servecast provides access to a fast growing global broadband audience for high value content such as News and Sport thereby generating additional revenue streams for content owners. Servecast is the partner of choice for sports broadcasters such as BSkyB, At The Races and Setanta Sports and facilitates the most commercially successful sports webcasting services in Europe. Servecast customers include Sky Sports, FC Barcelona, Liverpool FC, Manchester United FC, Chelsea FC, Arsenal FC, Rangers FC, the GAA, At The Races and the England and Wales Cricket Board. Darach Deehan, Chief Executive of Servecast, said: "We are delighted to have such strong representation from Europe's leading football clubs and federations. Our summit comes in between the current knockout phase of the UEFA Champions League and we are sure that clubs will be able to put aside their competitive spirit to share their experiences and learn how they can develop new media solutions to their mutual and collective advantage."

## **REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

### **Flood aims to secure Shelbourne finances**

Fionnbar Flood has stepped down as acting chairman of Shelbourne FC after negotiating a package aimed at securing the Dublin club's immediate future. The funding required to get the club through the coming

season, which begins in March, is on offer from Ossie Kilkenny, former U2 accountant, who, along with his business partners, owns an option to buy Tolka Park for development. It is now up to Ollie Byrne, owner and chief executive of Shelbourne FC, or his family, on his behalf, to accept. The club has until Wednesday to satisfy the First Instance Committee - the body responsible for issuing playing licences in the Republic of Ireland - that it has sufficient funds to clear outstanding monies owed to players, settle its tax obligations and also meet its wage bill for the 2007 campaign. Flood said in a statement: "At the request of Ollie Byrne and his colleagues on the management committee of Shelbourne FC, I have worked over the past few weeks to facilitate a package of measures that would enable Shelbourne Football Club to continue its illustrious presence in senior football in Ireland. This work has now reached the stage where proposals are being considered which have the potential to ensure that Shelbourne FC can continue to operate as an FAI National League Club. From the outset, I made it clear to both Ollie and his management committee that combining the role of chairman of a professional football club with my other business and personal commitments is not possible, given my own recent medical history. "

## **SPAIN**

### **Bwin move from Barca to Madrid**

Real Madrid are set to agree terms on a €75 million deal with the sponsor fellow Primera Division club Barcelona rejected - Austrian Internet gambling firm Betandwin, according to La Gaceta De Los Negocios. 'Bwin' are said to be one of the companies Real has been negotiating with for the past month. President Ramon Calderon has refused to identify the potential sponsors, limiting himself to saying that the "agreement would be unimaginable for any other club." Barca rejected a potential deal with Bwin following consultation with the club's members who were unhappy about entering into an agreement with a gambling company. Other firms to have been in the running for the Madrid deal are German energy giant E.On and Spanish firm Endesa. Sponsoring Real, however, has not proved successful for previous companies. Dairy firm Parmalat lost out financially on the deal, as did car distributor Otaysa and electronic giants Siemens were forced to sell their mobile phone division to BenQ, which subsequently went bankrupt.

## **NETHERLANDS**

### **Arbitration court rule out Feyenoord appeal**

Feyenoord's appeal against being kicked out of the UEFA Cup was dismissed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne last week. CAS upheld a decision taken by UEFA to expel the club following crowd trouble involving their fans at a UEFA Cup group stage match at Nancy in France on 30 November. CAS also upheld a fine of €60,000 on Feyenoord who were due to play English Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur in the first knockout round. The first leg was set to be held in Rotterdam next Wednesday with the return in London the following week. Spurs have been given a bye into the last 16 of the competition and will face either Braga of Portugal or Parma of Italy in the second knockout round. Friday's ruling was welcomed by new UEFA president Michel Platini.

## **RUSSIA**

### **Abramovich misses rich list top spot**

Roman Abramovich, the Russian tycoon and owner of English Premier League champions Chelsea, has slipped from first place in Russia's richest men list, according to Finance magazine. The rankings are published later today. Finance also revealed that the fortune of the top 10 jumped 53 per cent to US\$145 billion from US\$95 billion in 2005. Abramovich has been at the top for three years in a row. In 2005 his wealth was reported at US\$18.7 billion. Oleg Deripaska, owner of investment firm Basic Element, was in second place last year with US\$12.7 billion.

# CONMEBOL

## CHILE

### Chrysler agrees Universidad Catolica deal

Chrysler car manufacturers have put pen to paper on a contract to sponsor First Division club Universidad Catolica. The deal involves backing all of the club's sides and youth projects during 2007. "This sponsorship represents a great satisfaction for the North American Chrysler brand," said marketing director Claudio Campos. Comercial Chrysler, the representatives of the Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge brands in Chile, are already active in the golfing, motorcycling, rodeo and horse riding sport sectors in the South American country. The firm will also boast a visible presence at Catolica's San Carlos de Apoquindo ground.

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# CONCACAF

## USA

### Salt Lake stadium receives final approval

Real Salt Lake's bid for a soccer-specific stadium is coming to a successful conclusion, as the Utah House of Representatives definitively voted last week to approve the US\$35 million toward the project, reports the local Tribune. The measure was passed by the state authorities by a 48-24 margin two days after the Senate

approved it with a 20-8 vote. With Governor Jon Huntsman serving as one of the primary backers of the bill, his signature is now seen as a formality. "This really is a dream," RSL owner Dave Checketts said. "Thomas Paine, the great early American writer, said: 'That which we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly.' Well, this has come at great, great cost, but what a blessed event it is for our family, for my partners and for everyone associated with our organization." The bill provides US\$20 million from state taxes to build a parking structure in the South Towne Expo Center. That funding was originally set aside in 2005. An additional US\$15 million will be given for the purchase of land and public infrastructure. "All of us at Major League Soccer would like to sincerely thank Governor Huntsman and the Utah state legislature for their support of soccer in the Salt Lake City area," said MLS commissioner Don Garber. "The new stadium will be a world-class venue that will host countless memorable soccer moments, provide a key meeting place for the community, and shed an international spotlight on the region." The stadium deal's closure comes after various setbacks. Two weeks ago, it seemed as if Salt Lake County's Debt Review Committee had delivered the final blow, recommending by a 4-0 vote for County Mayor Peter Corroon to deny RSL the stadium funding they needed. Corroon followed the committee's recommendation, saying the project did not make financial sense.

## AFC

### AUSTRALIA

#### **New football analysis software launched by Australian company**

An Australian media business has launched a new software system that will give football coaches access to instant, broadcast-quality graphical analysis on players in some of the top leagues worldwide. PlayTrac for Coaches ([http://www.virtualspectator.com.au/playtrac\\_coach](http://www.virtualspectator.com.au/playtrac_coach)), a 3D soccer statistics system, has been developed by Australian business, Virtual Spectator International. Created from the technology used to provide real time analysis for international TV networks during the 2006 World Cup, PlayTrac for Coaches allows a team's management to view all the statistics on players from any angle, as the action occurs. The technology is lightweight and portable – all that's required is a laptop computer and broadband connection. Player performance can be analysed and compared with that of other players in different leagues and competitions worldwide, instantaneously. The system was used by several broadcasters during the 2006 World Cup - including ITV in the UK, Fox in the USA, SBS in Australia and Televisa in Mexico. Now available as a package for football management, the software currently covers some of the most important leagues around the world, including the European Champions League, La Liga of Spain, the German Bundesliga, Italian Serie A, MLS of the USA and the A League of Australia. Every statistic available on the PlayTrac system can be displayed either by team or by individual player, including analysis of shots at the goal, free kicks, passes, touches and defensive clearances. Thanks to the recently developed 'Head to Head Analysis' feature, any player from any team in any competition can now be compared with any other player from any other team in any other competition. Peter Lamb, CEO of Virtual Spectator International in Australia and the UK, comments: "After the success of PlayTrac during the 2006 World Cup, we decided to adapt the software for use by football teams. It's an invaluable tool for football management and, with the available data going back as far as 2003 for the Champions League, it's possible to track a player's entire career, including every pass, every goal attempt and every action they've performed in the last four years in that league." Virtual Spectator International Pty Ltd specialises in television graphics and statistics delivery. Established in 1987, the company launched its first 3D graphics product for sports broadcasting in 1995. The data for PlayTrac for coaches comes from Opta Sports Data, London.

## CAF

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### **PSL launch reserve league**

The Premier Soccer League (PSL) Reserve League pilot project has been finally launched at the League's Parktown, Johannesburg offices after calls for the League had been made by different quarters in the football fraternity, and given impetus by the appeal made by newly-appointed South African national first team coach Carlos Alberto Parreira late last year. The League will be initially based in Gauteng province during it's

experimental phase, according to its General Manager Dan Leboa. All eight teams are also represented in the Castle Premiership, i.e. SuperSport United, Jomo Cosmos, Orlando Pirates, Kaizer Chiefs, Mamelodi Sundowns BidVest Wits, Benoni Premier United and Moroka Swallows. Leboa also confirmed that only players and technical staff who are officially registered with the League and the South African Football Association (SAFA) will be allowed to participate in the League. Venues at which the matches take place must also be officially approved by the League, Leboa told the gathered media and representatives from various club Youth Development academies. The League will not only be looking to develop fresh talent, but is also aiming at providing up-and-coming referees with an opportunity to hone their skills. "The League will give them a chance to be gradually introduced into becoming match officials in top flight football," Leboa commented. Meanwhile, PSL Chief Executive Officer Trevor Phillips appealed to everyone involved to give the League their best in making sure that it becomes a success. "The assessment we will make at the end of the current season will determine how best we would then hopefully spread it to the rest of the country." Phillips highlighted the fact the exercise will add to the PSL's intention to improve the game on the field of play. Players will be covered by the same insurance as those covered in the Castle Premiership.

## **GHANA**

### **Velletri Soccer Group launch new soccer academy in Ghana**

US based Velletri Soccer Group has opened a new soccer academy in Accra, Ghana. The concept of VSG is to bring new soccer stars to the pitch and to create good citizens. The company is currently operating in several countries. Within the new academy in Ghana there are 15 young players between the ages of 12 to 15. One of the most talented players in the VSG Soccer Academy, Prince, has already played for two different national top clubs and has experience of playing tournaments abroad. The academy manager Mr. Margot describes Prince as "an extremely quick and technical player with an excellent feeling to score from midfield. A lot of talented players are coming from Ghana, like spectacular Michael Essien in the Chelsea side. The objective of VSG is to raise more quality players in our academy." "The concept of VSG is a totally new way of thinking within soccer, with our products soccer sponsor & academy sponsor, individuals and companies can join and follow the development of a talented youth soccer player. Who would not like to be a sponsor of a player in the common Ghanaians or Argentinean National team", comments Joachim Kamph Founder & CEO. VSG in Ghana recently signed a two year sponsorship deal with Fun Play GH Ltd which means that Fun Play will be Official Club Sponsor of VSG in Ghana. Fun Play is a lottery and gambling company and owns its own gambling licenses with rights to have sports betting and scratch cards operation in Ghana.

## **Industry Moves**

Arminia Bielefeld coach Thomas von Heesen, who was due to step down at the end of the season to make way for his number two Frank Geideck, is leaving the Bundesliga club. "I agreed with the club before (Sunday's 1-0 loss at Bayern Munich) that my contract would end," von Heesen said at a televised news conference.

Eircom League side Sligo Rovers have appointed Sinead Fraher to the post of club promotions officer, a position funded by the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) at all eircom League of Ireland sides.

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